

Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council (MECAC)
Public Policy Committee Minutes
September 26-27, 2007

FY 08-09 Recap:

Jamie Palagi gave a report on the successes of the Legislative Session for SFY 08 and 09 which included securing funding to conduct the market rate survey annually and to adjust accordingly; to update the sliding fee scale in accord with current Federal Poverty Guidelines; to allow for a slight caseload increase; Working Caretaker Relative program which is funded with TANF direct monies; changing the Montana Child Care Act to allow for a variety of rate settings.

Full Time Kindergarten Follow-Up:

MECAC has watched this issue carefully, and while the council has not taken a formal position, it is most concerned with the effects in the community of full time kindergarten. Committee members have heard from child care providers that they are seeing the effects of full time kindergarten in two ways: they have had slots open for child care as a result, and have filled those slots; and that the children do not have care for out of school time including no school days, afterschool, early release days. **ACTION ITEM:** The committee has identified the following groups as active stakeholders in the Full time kindergarten work and also as advocates for young children- Montana Head Start Association, School readiness Task Force, the School Board Association, MtAEYC, MtCCA, MtCCR&R, PTA, someone from OPI. The committee recommends that ECSB host a conference call with the stakeholders to address the effects of Full time kindergarten and to create a discussion around a tool kit or suggestions for communities in meeting the needs of the children beyond full time kindergarten. This will occur before the January 2008 meeting. **Committee Members:** Please send to Jamie Palagi the list of identified effects of full time kindergarten that would need to be shared with the stakeholders by **December 10, 2007**.

Benchmarks:

The committee reviewed the current benchmarks and made the following recommendations:

Delete #1 *By the end of SFY 2007, increase the number of star providers by 10%.* , Keep #2 *By the end of SFY 07, increase by 10% the number of providers accredited by nationally recognized early childhood organizations,* Delete #3 *Increase by 2% the proportion of children served through the BB scholarship program as compared to the number of children in families with income under 150% of the FPL,* and Replace with #2 on the legislative benchmarks, Keep #4 *Increase by 10% the number of caregivers at a level 3 or higher on the practitioner registry,* undecided related to #5 *increase the number of caregivers enrolled and completing the Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship program by 10%.*

Economic Impact Study:

Jamie Palagi reported that the study is underway thanks to the generous support of the Governor's Office and the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation. We have

contracted with the National Economic Development & Law Center out of California. The task force continues to work specific details. It is expected that the full report will be available early spring of 2008.

SFY 08 Consumer Education Work:

Jamie Palagi reported that consumer education dollars this year will be used to continue the School Readiness campaign by running the TV and Radio ads, distribution of brochures, and the contractor will create posters focusing on the School Readiness theme.

Recommendations for QAD re: Infant/Toddler Ratio discussion:

The committee discussed that they would like to see QAD research the national recommendations from NAEYC, NAFCC, Early Head Start, etc.

Items needed for the November quality discussion:

Copies of QRS systems in other states; copies of the applications and procedures for all of our quality programs; 2007 child care data report?; 2005-2007 #s of applications for programs and #s of denied applications; copy of policy manual re: prioritization of funding.